

Visions
and
Interpretations

Bruce Moore



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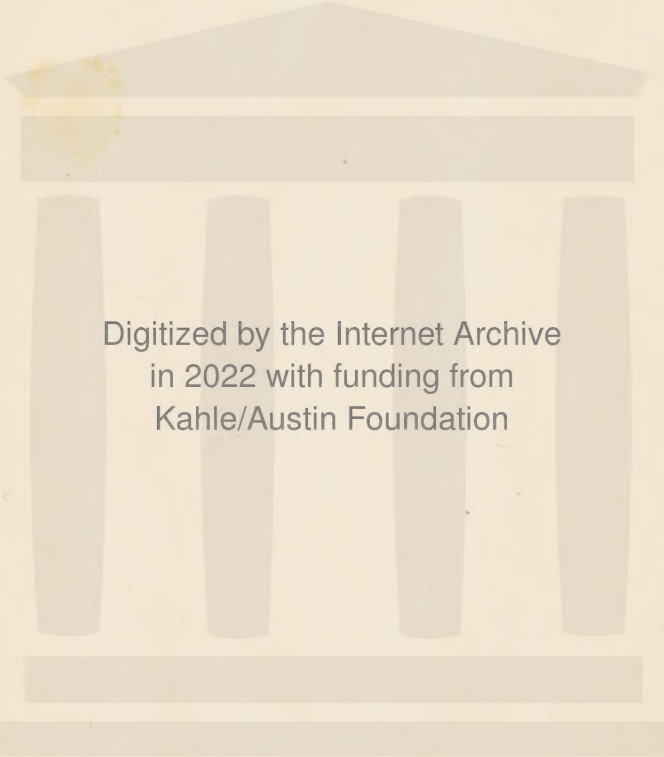
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VISIONS
AND
INTERPRETATIONS

BY
BRUCE MOORE

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Of the selected pieces of miscellaneous verse contained in this volume, two had been previously published: namely, *The Crime of Crimes* and *Love and I*. The first of these appeared in the June 1, 1913, issue of "The New York Times Magazine Supplement," the second appearing in a later issue of "The New York Times." They are here republished through the courtesy of that journal.

The piece entitled *Beyond the Maze* was written in 1905. The remaining pieces represent in part the work of the ensuing eight or nine years, with the exception of *Faith's Task*, which was written less than one year ago.

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VISIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

[1]

BEYOND THE MAZE

(A sick man speaks to the watcher
in attendance at his bedside.)

I

IT is not I who linger here
The bondman of a pitying bier
While the unwilling wheels of Time
Run slow and yet more slow, until—
By grit obstructed or by grime—
They shall become inert and still.
What matter that the body waits
The lifting of unbolted gates?
My tether now so loosely lies
That, though some strand may haply yet
Not quite its former hold forget,
I soar at will, nor traveler-wise,
While here my body labors on:
More lightly than shall ever mote
On the air's bosom learn to float,
I have of late not seldom gone

BEYOND THE MAZE

Far forth, as only spirit can,
To India or to Ispahan,
Adventuring thence Antarctic snows
Or flitting through the Mexicoes.

II

Nay, if I will, I can—and soon—
Attend upon the crescent Moon;
Or note beneath Saturnian rings
What the Saturnian season brings.
Nay, more: with them who are, like me,
Inheritors of Liberty,
I read the secret of the Sun;
For, making his own beams my chart,
Ere yet my veering flight be done
I peer into his mighty heart.
Thence, it may be, I journey forth
Where is no South, where is no North;
And ere I hitherward return
I give new names to orbs new-seen,
That rule some wide, some new, demesne
Or with peculiar splendor burn.

III

But, hark ye, friend. Of humankind,
Is there one man than this more blind?

BEYOND THE MAZE

By night he, upward looking, deems—
As if a stranger thing could be
Than a finite Infinity—
The Universe but what it seems:
A labyrinth of sun and star
Having a limit set afar,
A limit whose unmeasured bound
By mere void Space is girdled round.
Ah, let him stand as having power
In some sure place, in some sure hour,
Beyond yon Milky Way: and lo!
He shall behold on high aglow
Another Milky Way that hath
Another still beyond its arch,
As farther on another's path
Leads many and many another's march;
While, farther still—but vision quails
And overtired language fails.

IV

A bold thing now—aye; closer lean:
Here a half-glimpse and there a trace,
I by God's grace have somewhat seen.
Pervading even ethereal Space,
There is a mediate vast Machine
Whose pressures, differently felt,
Can make the massy mountain melt;

BEYOND THE MAZE

The lightnings flash, the hills a-top;
The light-wave tremble in its groove;
The meteor, earthward fallen, stop;
The sun-led systems onward move—
For O the tide that flows between
The motive-parts of that Machine!
I might indeed almost aver,
So deep in it and hid so well
Do its concurrent forces dwell,
That when the Great Interpreter—
But who am I that dare incline
To flaunt that mystery divine?

V

Yet through what marvels do I fare!
Nay, marvels of mine own I bear,
And those that are not wholly mine
Appear mine own as by design;
For in the places where I roam
To journey is to dwell at home—
There Mind so clearly speaks to Mind
That words are music, speech-enshrined.
Be free in thought awhile, as I;
What marvels do you now behold,
As we range thus your lower sky!
See: what was base has turned to gold;
For yonder slums that shamed the town

BEYOND THE MAZE

Are temples now nor longer frown;
And even the stately monuments
Take lovelier shapes when gazed on hence.
The crooked streets where traffics roar
Show now no angles any more:
Here the streets frame a rounding curve;
Beyond, in flowing lines they swerve
Or change into a fair ellipse;
While, glorious to her finger tips,
The Spirit of Beauty hovers there,
Beneath us in the ambient air,
As if the town in sorrow were
And she a Heaven-sent comforter.

VI

Illusion? Aye: distance and flight
Have played this trick upon our sight;
Yet oft, from even Illusion, we
May conjure forth Reality.
The selfsame city lies there still;
And Evil there yet works her will,
As if a mission to fulfill:
But is it strange that, gazing down
In rapid flight on that far town,
I can discern in yonder dream
Of beauty more than things that seem?
For soon I shall unhindered rise

BEYOND THE MAZE

Where Evil's wing but feebly flies,
Her every motion showing well
How far below 'tis hers to dwell.
Let e'er so slight the distance prove
'Twixt us and our low earthly groove—
Toward what fair heights may not we move!
Shall we bear hence, when Earth we quit,
The gold we sinned for so in it?
The animal wants whose constant cry
Was: "Live for us or of us die?"
The blood that, hot with passion's bane,
Seemed only passion to contain?
The lustful restless eye that drew
Us Evil-ward so oft anew?
O the fair body, dear and sweet—
Yet in it what allurements meet,
Each having some material root,
Each fettering hand or fettering foot!

VII

Let some new scroll be now unrolled:
Haply I turn anon to mark,
Be it by day or in the dark,
Now Birth awhile and now Decease,
With all the mysteries they hold.
Thereby my knowledges increase
Till, wiser than your wisest be,

BEYOND THE MAZE

I pry into Futurity.

Thence, looking still beyond the maze
Of Earth's brief Morrows and Todays,
I scan the widening ways that thread
The wondrous country of the Dead.

VIII

What if I can but name as yet
The letters of its alphabet?
Right well I know then that I am
A Being, not a fleeting sham;
For, to Creation gently pressed,
I lean upon her heart, at rest,
And, glancing through the clear serene,
Discern in part what these things mean:
Eternal Hope, Eternal Sloth,
Eternal Joy, Eternal Pain,
Eternal Cost, Eternal Gain,
Eternal Youth, Eternal Growth;
And, firm or faint, Eternal Loss,
That wholly irreducible dross.

IX

Ah, myriads past, for weal or woe,
Have learned the way these things to know;
And deep into that bottomless urn

BEYOND THE MAZE

Shall other myriads gaze in turn:
For countless Earths bear countless men,
Each Earth assured her portion when
Approving Time the moment shows
And Nature's fervor freely flows.

X

Yet, when those men, by Death's decree
Leaving Mortality behind,
Go thence to meet their destiny
As 'prentices to Life and Mind,
Can there be one, set newly where
He treads that peopled thoroughfare,
Who shall not well or ill perceive
That, mothered by the earliest Eve
Of many a slow-responding Earth,
A Great Exemplar has found birth
And in due time has lifted up
For men a sacrificial cup?
That still that Guardian Watcher keeps
A chart of all the heights and deeps
That tower above or yawn below
The paths along which footsteps go?
That, should some new, some future, war
One soul, thus tended, further scar,
'Twere idle thence to shift the blame
Or say: "This through my body came"?

BEYOND THE MAZE

XI

Nay, though the sweet or sombre tale
Be slowly noted bit by bit,
What traveler on that road shall fail
To read on an unerring scale
His individual reckoning, writ
So that he cannot question it?
Maugre denial, maugre doubt,
He finds his own true reckoning out,
Being himself the scale whereon
Himself is weighed; while marks, clear-traced—
O when shall all be love-effaced?—
Show how that scale is writ upon.
But—who is this—that—like a bride—
Ah, Hilda! (As that name he sighed,
He sweetly smiled and, smiling, died.)

AUTUMN'S PLEA

WHAT! Blame you me, O Standers-by?
 "More grateful be," I might reply;
For till my term be nearly gone
As week by week you may behold,
I put new robes of beauty on
Your every hill and vale and wold.
When through their tints, those tender hints,
I lift your hopes this life beyond,
As well I may I inly say:
 "Of you my thoughts are—
 "Thoughts divinely fond."

TO A MOCKING BIRD

VOLUBLE winger, what bird is like thee?
For, be the time Autumn or let it be May—
What bright free hour of a bright free day
Would, where thou art not, be so bright or so
free?

But O the delight
Of the day and the night
If the season be June!
Devoting their treasures
To thee and thy measures,
The trees and the flowers
With thee are in tune;
And proffer thee bowers
Unnumber'd wherein,
To hearten thy mate,
Thou art free to begin
Love's account of thy state.

Yet, borrower, singer,
Mimicry flinger,

TO A MOCKING BIRD

Prophet and seer—
While thou art swaying
Thy bough and portraying
Some phase of a Maying
That one day shall be,
Moon-lit Midnight is here,
As minded never to flee;
And my awed soul teems
With hints from thy themes
Which the more intertwine
Since they clearly assign,
Nor with emphasis wrong,
Themselves and their meanings
To stranger convenings
Than to nestmates belong.

With glad eyes that glisten
I wondering wait;
With a rapt ear I listen,
Responsive, elate.

Thy sweet repetition
Of chantings melodic;
Thy mimic rendition
Of scenes episodic;
Thine integral phrases;
Thy skill that amazes;
Thy wisdom that teaches

TO A MOCKING BIRD

By tireless volition
And potently reaches
An ampler fruition—
All these, my heart deems,
Here aptly combine
Until, through thy song
And the ways that are thine,
I am ruled, meseems,
By a rapture, firm, strong.
Thenceforward, in turn
And as by a taut thong,
I am led to divine,
To believe, to discern,
That a Presence is near thee—
(*Did she wing from the Void?*
Does she seem Earth-alloyed?)—
And waits but to hear thee
Ere homeward she goes,
Ecstatic, uncloyed:
Even blind eyes might see
How sweetly she throws
Fond glances towr'd thee.

Like dreams that at will
Their own promise fulfill,
I seem to myself
Not a man-creature still,
But a purified elf.

TO A MOCKING BIRD

Thereafter, as he—
Intensively stirred
By many a token
Of pure wizardry—
From a vantage-place near
I am granted to hear,
To interpret, each word
By the Visitant spoken.

Yet, magical bird,
Though still under thy spell,
All that here I have heard;
And, thy measures between,
All that here I have seen
Or that later befell—
Dare I wilfully tell?

ONE FLOWER

ONE flower, nor proffer'd by mistake,
Is granted us, that we may make
It, of our care, our tender skill,
A priceless token if we will.

Unnumber'd as the waves at sea,
Our human hearts beat variously;
But each, in very sooth, has power
To make, of love, a wondrous flower.

THE CRIME OF CRIMES

I

SPEED, speed, O Time, that glad fair day
When War shall be a throneless king;
The sword, inspiring ode nor lay,
A dust-clad thing.

Let the red hand, with blood a-smear,
No more upon thy Glory-roll
Trace names that, great though they appear,
Profane thy scroll.

Cleanse thou that record: write thereon
As may befit the patriot's case;
But bid the spurious names begone
To their own place.

As on thenceforth thy Future fares,
Keep heedful watch, O Time, lest thou
Print thine own censure unawares
On thine own brow;

THE CRIME OF CRIMES

For should, unwarned, thy servants cast
Old glammers over ages new,
Unto thyself shall, first or last,
The blame accrue.

The barbarous ages can but show
More fair than shall this age of thine,
If it, of countless paths arow,
Choose the malign.

II

Alas, how many, many a year
Have men been men at woeful cost,
Buying a transient treasure dear
With treasures lost:

Perchance that one self-seeker might
In shamle-yards a guerdon gain,
What rich lands have in grievous plight
Through long years lain!

And still, though dedicate at birth
To steps that leave the brute behind,
Man, lured by things of doubtful worth
Or self-inclined,

THE CRIME OF CRIMES

From true endeavor turns away,
As for his brother's blood athirst,
And makes fair fields that smiling lay
Fair fields accurst.

III

How long shall yet the nations dare
A God of Justice to affront,
Imploring Him in impious prayer,
As they are wont,

For blessings on the arm they lift
In prideful hate or vengeful greed:
And labeling as His gracious gift
The spoiler's meed?

Let something Christian be begun;
Or hear rough Candor's voice proclaim,
"Murder and Wanton War are one
In all save name."

But we? Hymn we the Law of Love?
Yet in what dubious wayward mimes
If still our sanction rest above
The Crime of Crimes!

THE CRIME OF CRIMES

IV

Haply, plain million-folk, we wield
No staff of State, or low or high;
But, to ourselves awhile revealed,
 Can we deny

That, mindful but of loss or gain,
We have built spreading frenzy-fires—
Perhaps turned into bitter pain
 Our own desires?

Then, fated by our own decree,
Our own hearths made thus desolate,
Where shall we hide our agency
 Behind the State?

Away with sophistries outworn!
Through us the Nation upward towers;
If through her blood-guilt myriads mourn,
 That guilt is ours.

THE HOUSE OF MANY FLOORS

A HOUSE there is of many floors:
The walls are built of clay;
While here or there are countless doors
That open many a way.

A lock helps every door to keep
The secret of a room:
And, till the key-bolt's backward sweep
Relieves the chamber's gloom,

He who can trace that secret's clew
Must be a very seer,
May even forebode that, swiftly new,
A yawning gulf is near;

For in that House oft, oft, is found
A floor, built high or low,
That now is like the solid ground,
And now like the winds that blow.

THE HOUSE OF MANY FLOORS

Locks master-keyed and wrought in steel
Are daily bought and sold;
But a lock whose tiniest ward can feel
We must a marvel hold.

Yet though that House, of wondrous things,
Is a bewildering maze,
A master-key within it swings;
And he whom this obeys,

The building-plan permitting, may
Turn any bolt at will—
Nay, treasure untold shall him repay,
The plan consenting still.

But O the aisle their tears bedew
Whose memories haunt the door
That shuts a loved one's face from view
And shall forevermore!

DISILLUSION

I FLUNG a stone into a brook;
And saw, methought, the pebble change
Into a jewel richly strange.
I drew it forth, and joy forsook
My eager eyes, the while a curl
Enthralled my lip. No more a pearl,
The prize enchantment once had shown
Was now a simple pebbly stone.
Ah, through what like enchantments wild
Have many a man and wife and maid
Seen, even as I, their jewel fade;
As I their willing hopes beguiled!

LOVE AND I

LOVE and I once a-Maying went;
I was a dunce of a willful bent:
Little I meant save idle play;
But Love, pale, scornful, stole away.

Year follow'd year; he came not back:
My days were drear and lone, alack!
From nights more black than darkness throws
In the path of dawn oft, oft, I rose.

Then, by a chance too dearly bought,
Love's wistful glance anew I caught;
But, venturing naught, Love thence withdrew
At a hesitant pace far, far, from view.

Through many an hour have I since then
In street and bower watch'd maids and men,
Assured that when I noted there
With a kindling eye some love-taught pair,

LOVE AND I

I could yet learn how I, too, might—
Should Love return, his favor invite;
But, pitiless quite, anigh my door
Though it stand ajar Love comes no more.

Of all Mankind, the sorrowful folk
Are they who, blind, forge their own yoke:
Dare I invoke, O Fate, thy will?
Be kind; or keep me hopeful still.

THE GARDEN OF ART

WHERE that plot nestles,
Rich growths a-bloom—some hung upon
trestles—
Enrapture the heart and enkindle the eyes
Of every beholder; for each day tries,
As an athlete wrestles,
To engraft on old hopes new hopes that suffice.

The long strong Summer—
The Spring, too, mayhap—of many a comer
Has so water'd that ground, so tended and tilled,
That chalices precious and lavishly filled
Bid bee and bid hummer
Sip quickly a nectar that else may be spilled.

Who cannot remember
Some glory attendant on fertile September?
Yet, e'en while a path of October we strew
With garlands, we come upon hue after hue
Of aging November
That rivals the richest the year ever knew.

THE GARDEN OF ART

But we murmur, "Alas!"
Who muse on the shadows that, pitying, mass
Over hoary December. His losses and gains
We incline to sum up in a thought that remains:
 "Peering in, as through glass,
"Life croons to him now only fitful refrains."

FAITH'S PHILOSOPHY

TELL not me in manner deft
That they o'er whose loss ye sigh—
Haply as anew bereft—
Pent up and inert shall lie,
Through Eternity the victims
Of a coffin'd theft:
Or say clearly why.

Onward tow'rd another state
Even the unseen atom runs;
Destined to be new-create
Wheel an hundred million Suns:
Nothingness, then, instant, utter—
Can but this await
Our Departing Ones?

O the woeful woeful waste,
If the clay alone survive;
If, by endless changes faced,
It shall find a way to thrive

FAITH'S PHILOSOPHY

While the lovely fated inmate,
From the clay displaced,
Can nor hope nor strive!

Shall that inmate merge and mingle
With the general life of things?
No; for Life—created single,
Having individual wings—
This were veiled annihilation:
To her separate ingle
Life, undaunted, clings.

Doubt not that a threaded clew—
Though the labyrinth be wide
And the ways be changeful, new—
Spans the whole from side to side,
Joins the Farther and the Nigher:
Though the strands be few
Firmly are they tied.

But continuing Consciousness,
Will and Memory—what of them?
Still the Great implies the Less:
Tokens that the Parent Stem,
Vivifying every blossom,
Shall not one oppress,
Shall not one condemn

FAITH'S TASK

LET the skeptic following,
Blind to Life and Life's behest,
See in these that idle thing,
An unmeaning one-day quest.

Art not thou, O Faith, the more
Bound as by a solemn vow?
Toil thou, then, Death's gates, before:
What a joy were thine, could'st thou,

Nowise erring through belief,
Make discovery's goal thine own,
Be, among discoverers, chief!
Haply thus, and thus alone,

May we, with thy lore imbued,
Apprehend, define, the way—
Disappearing, yet renewed—
That from Darkness leads to Day.

VOICES OF THE YEAR

DESPOTIC WINTER

HO there! My train, take aimful heed
That ye serve well the Young Year's need;
For, summoned from the Outer Vast,
His marshal, admiral, guide, I am.
My Space-bred storm-fed forces massed,
High shall I lift his oriflamme;
And, ere I furl one point at last,
His rule shall be a rule and not a vaunted sham.

Aye, Queen, still cower
Beneath my power:
They shall need grace
Through many woes,
Who dare oppose
The lords of Space.
Hence! Claimant fair, pretender young,
Wag elsewhere that complaining tongue.

JANUARY

(1)

THE orphan of a dead and buried Year,
I turn to frozen fields from frozen shores;
Into the snow-whipt air no song-bird soars:
The angry wind's voice brings my only cheer;
For, even if craving, seeking, love I peer
Into the homes of men, thence mocking doors
Bid me whose hard rule penury so deplores
Go hie me, loveless, to my hill-tops drear.

Thus am I in rude irony called a queen;
But ironies ruder still my rule defy,
Nor can I on an inner strength rely:
Usurping Winter covets my demesne;
And that my very strongholds oft have seen
Him wear my crown, how shall I even deny?

JANUARY

(2)

THOUGH it may seem that feeble is my reign
And that I but a doubtful sceptre bear,
What wrangling envious force of earth or air
Shall make the wearied year-worn soils complain
That through my fault their toil has been in
vain?

Right well they know that, howsoe'er I fare,
My change-wrought alchemies they freely share
And, resting while they share, new vigor gain.

Call this illusion; but my monthlong span—
Let it, O men, were doubt on question piled,
Cherish one thought still, nor seem self-beguiled.
'Twas I with whom your yearly course began;
Somewhat, even yet, I typify the child,
The sweetest, fairest blessing known to Man.

WINTER'S FOREBODING

SPRING! The sweet Spring—
The mightiest minister
Of Love, as I aver
Beyond all questioning—
It may be that when she appears
I shall awhile, to frown, pretend,
Refuse to give, refuse to lend;
But well I know that when her tears
Begin to trickle slowly down,
I, mindful but of her, shall say,
The while I doff my triple crown,
“Command me, Sweeting, I obey.”

FEBRUARY

(1)

I STAND now where, the way, no searcher
learns:

Be their deserts or many held, or few,
My new days wait the Year's unravelled clew.
The seasonal ardor deep within me burns
Not yet; not yet for scope or action yearns.
Let Labor, then, recall his burly crew;
Let Care go hence, nor trouble me anew;
Pure sloth shall be the chief of my concerns.

But idlers, even, may earn; for, night and day,
My fallowing soils grow mellower. Hence, O men,
The lands that yearly ye to me resign—
Though I call not their harvest-profit mine,
Is not some tribute due me, now and then?
What numeral stands for more than ciphers may?

FEBRUARY

(2)

THOUGH following still, O men, in Winter's
track

As holding the round Earth a thing to use
E'en as I will, do I my power abuse?
What good thing thereby do ye lose, or lack,
For whom my kingly treasures I unpack?
My saps that are my richest revenues
I freely give, although I might refuse,
Nor from the ungrateful, even, keep any back.

Bears, then, my hope a too resplendent flower?
Should ye not cry me a more blithesome 'Hail!'
With friendlier voices, nor with looks awry?
Brief is my reign: to each his little hour.
Ye whom I serve, let my brief hour avail
To be, as well, a happy one, say I.

SPRING'S WARNING

HEED, O Winter, I implore:
 Bar me not from mine own dwelling;
 Soon should many a bud be swelling,
Still expanding, leaf and core.
Must, then, prayers give way to warning?
Wreck not in their early morning
 Hopes that should be now ascendant:
Haste; for Spring is at the door,
 And young Love, her shy attendant,
Going, may return no more.

MARCH

(1)

OF the Year's future, that abundant stream,
Well might I claim to be the potent source:
Turbid I may be; yet, a turbid force.
But even my force may fail. Soon, then, the
gleam
Of the soft sunrays, entering beam by beam,
Would change the torrent, seething, foam-
fleck'd, hoarse,
Into a sleepy flow that in its course
Could scarce disturb a water-lily's dream.

Am I content to fail? Content I am;
For who, remembering Motion's passionate
thrill,
Would long be likened to the tepid rill
That, feebly false, is but a liquid sham?
Motion, give me!—Motion, that dike nor dam
Shall stem, shall stop—be it for good or ill.

MARCH

(2)

TILL I sink back into my yearlong swoon,
“Go, Termagant!” men cry with voice and
soul.

Ah me, must I, then, pent as in a bowl
Break Winter’s grip with a low drowsy croon!
Methinks a rude gift were the truer boon;
For, were the winds, through some unstayed
control,
Forever stilled, a slowly sickening shoal
Would creep round lands bare as a dead cold
moon.

In what slow chant of the revolving years,
O men, shall ye your murmuring restrain?
Did never one harsh note assail your ears,
Did only cloying harmonies remain,
Soon would life cease to be a thing that cheers:
He knows not joy who never suffered pain.

THE KISS OF SPRING

WAKE, O loiterers; drowse not on:
While through idle hours ye slumber,
Treasures passing note or number
Beg of you their worth to con.
Sweet avowals, tender favors,
Joy's own hues and youth's own savors,
If not woefully prevented—
They, too, may be yours anon.
Ah, all's well! Be each contented:
This receive, your lips upon.

APRIL

(1)

THE changeful gatherer of fair hopes am I—
 Hopes not less changeful than am I myself:
The broadest land, to me, is but the shelf,
Wedged in between the ocean and the sky,
Whereon rich opportunities may lie.
Seizing on these, as ye, O men, on pelf,
If I enact the inconsiderate elf,
As oft, for very thoughtfulness, I sigh.

And wherefore do I err, in that I heed
The cry of the young blood that lightly leaps?
Where the dull mind in changeless torpor sleeps,
Hope's fairest flower shrinks to a worthless weed:
Barren her fields are; she no harvest reaps;
But lies deserted, helpless, in her need.

APRIL

(2)

WERE I not April, somewhat might I know
In feeble wise about the seeming lure
Which for me makes, of change, a pathway sure.
But April—even a few brief days ago
Did, through his veins, my strong free current
flow?
Be glad, O men, that thus do I mature:
How things outworn may still awhile endure,
Yourselves might else too willingly foreshow.

Dear kindred Months, if in a gainful round
Ye fain would move, observe my course awhile;
And thence with tints borrowed from my career
Imbue your own. By no crude shackle bound,
Still blithely fronting in progressive file—
So should we one day frame the Golden Year.

DEPARTING SPRING

HEARKEN, ye who earlier heard me;
 Ye to whom the promise came;
Ye whose ardors oft have stirr'd me,
 Oft have set my heart aflame:
When I came, I came to bless;
 Could I, and for very shame,
In departing, love you less?

As the bud wherewith I cheer you
 Potently precedes the flower,
To new seasons drawing near you,
 I bequeath, convey, a power
That shall more enrich your days.
 Sometimes, then, though Winter lower,
Think that still, on me, ye gaze.

MAY

(1)

OF all the Twelve, the happiest lot is ours—
Mine, and the lot of my true lover, June.
Forever young, we fear no boding rune;
Summer and Spring, both, counted as our dowers,
What prophecy shall vex our leafy bowers?
Even when my Maytime, like a waning moon,
Shrinks to a thread, there shall remain a boon
Which not even Exile's hungry tooth devours.

I shall but melt into my lover's life
Ere all my flowerful sovereignty be past,
As, in her bridegroom's vine-hung trellised cot,
Into his being melts the willing wife.
Who, then, shall doubt that fortunate is my lot?
Let all my days bear witness, even the last.

MAY

(2)

THOUGH the warm sap no more be free to
shun

The early bud, what forward-reckoning
hour

Can fittingly foreshow the perfect flower?

The timid grace, the perfume but begun,

The sweet luxuriances that one by one

Live in mere promise yet, still humbly cower

Under the Springtime's too unfertile power

Like shadows waiting an effectual sun.

Matured through love, till I through love became

The nursing Mother of my Peoples all

Or taught them, woman-like, as at my knee,

I rose not to the level of my name;

I was not May. Till Motherhood befall,

A woman's reign is but a regency.

SUMMER'S ADVENT

SONG; and more Song!
Sing, O blithe Day, O Evening fair:
Thus, bound as by a tuneful thong,
Shall Day with Evening sweetly pair.
Prove still that ye to me belong;
And, through each hour that hour succeeds,
Shall Song stir Love to nobler deeds—
Deeds claiming Fortune as their friend,
Since Love and Song their birth attend.
Then, Evening, Day and all your throng,
Chant, ye who may, "Song; and more Song!"

JUNE

(1)

THEY who, through me, no moiety obtain
Of that for which they strive in ventures
wide—

Be it a treasure sole, or multiplied—
May still, to asking, lend a liberal rein
And, through their asking, richer treasures gain;
For, though that selfsame portion be denied,
Though it I still refuse, the wish deride—
Still am I willing, willing is my train.

To fortunate firm foundation-building June,
Who owes not thus a swiftly mounting debt
That payment would but pile up high and higher?
And yet, ye who with me and mine commune—
Over our final reckoning need ye fret?
Why frown because a boon approaches nigher?

JUNE

(2)

WOULD any know a Being doubly blest?

Lo, that am I; for May and I are one.
Ev'n ere her duty's web was wholly spun,
Did May frequent a nook at love's behest—
Thither went I by pathways known or guessed:
But, since her own fair flowerful course was run,
Our spirits have merged as elsewhere mingle none
And, no more twain, tenant a single breast.

Hence, then, it comes that all Mankind unite
In rendering homage to my very name:
And when were yet these plaudits ill-bestowed?
Who thinks—in June—of lowliness or blight,
Far-threatening harm or nearer-hovering blame?
The meanest path is like a royal road.

SUMMER'S HEIGHT

LIGHT; and more Light!

But this, my Children, understand:
Though high my zeniths wing their flight,
Not of sky-curves do I demand
That all my hopes they shall requite;
For high o'er Beauty, o'er Emprise,
Other than skyey zeniths rise.
Then, since for these your aid may serve
More to round out some lengthening curve,
Appear, draw nigh; for I invite:
Here with me cry, "Light; and more Light!"

JULY

(1)

WHO sways as I the destinies of the Year?
Not mine, the plaints are that enhearten
Age;

For prescience and achievement, both, engage
To serve me freely, meet they far or near.
So, even as I—and ere mischance appear—
On land-wide perils timely warfare wage,
My Peoples all, nor on a mimic stage,
Shape triumphs new under my guidance clear.

The strong sure type of Action, where I stand
Erect, exultant, on my mid-year height,
As well becomes the lord of every land—
What need I say of Failure or of Might?
To my High Noon of Life, by whose command
Shall babblers prate of Force, nor mean the
Right?

JULY

(2)

THAT Thought is free, O men, I do not
grieve:

My heats ye feel; and sometimes when ye let
My higher aims be hid by your own sweat,
My hopes, ye fear, may airy fabrics weave
That, being airy, but the more deceive.
Material things, ye can nowise forget;
But when, ye ask, draw I into my net
The world's great issues, their success achieve?

But circumstance—let it your doubts restrain:
Call forth two, only, of my earlier days—
Their tale, yourselves have sung in deathless lays.
The powers that then I wielded I retain;
Those mighty days claim not their own in vain:
Two continents are vocal with their praise.

SUMMER'S REPOSE

GENTLE comer, I am Summer,
 Fain to task your courtesy.
Bid my warders, by my orders,
 Thus proclaim, as times agree:
“Ye who have your labor done;
“Ye who have your guerdon won—
 “For a while from care set free,
 “Meet me 'neath my trysting-tree.”
Gentle comer, I am Summer:
 Do my errand faithfully;
 Come, thereafter, and with me
 Restful be, restful be.

AUGUST

(1)

“**S**ET me,” I said, “no undertaking hard”—
When I the first Year’s earliest call
obeyed—
“Seeing that labor, of due rest afraid,
“Too long continued is but labor marred.
“Account me, then, as I myself regard,
“The easeful tenant of an easeful shade.”
This timely choice thus duly, freely, made—
Ever have I and mine been happy-starred.

What though the willing life-blood gently slows?
Let still, without, a fitting quiet reign—
So shall my queenly sovereignty maintain
The poise, the calm, whose value well it knows.
The action-mad may action-mad remain:
I choose the boon that leads to true repose.

AUGUST

(2)

CRY me not "Fie!" as held more indolent
Than may beseem a labor-needing Earth:
Beyond the half-world's full-distended girth
I have another realm. There have I spent
So many days of every year, intent
On busy labor since that labor's birth,
That surely, if in labor there be worth,
I here may fitly show my natural bent.

Wherefore let me, demanding only peace—
The peace that who may, more than I, de-
serve?—
Of restful sleep, O men, renew my lease.
Who knows that, thus, each hour's descending
curve
May not one day, your own hearts, better nerve
Rightly to meet the sleep that shall not cease?

AUTUMN'S TOUCH

RED and brown, up and down—red and brown
and sere—

Just one touch; not too much:

Ever are the lovely sweetly prone to fear.

But, a spray of golden and its message olden—

Shall, O regions fair, their purport be forgot?

Hearken, all; not one spot

That gold robes may clothe shall be slighted here.

Aye, O wood and lane; aye, O hill and plain;

Mountain, too: none of you

E'er shall need to say I turned from you away.

Nay, let red nor gold nor brown miss a single
town;

For town, country, both I reach; and strove I
to teach

I, mayhap, should something tell

That would serve them both, serve them passing
well.

SEPTEMBER

(1)

A FRIENDLY vista, opening out between
Two views, a lovely and a lovelier,
Needs but the eye as its interpreter.
Then, turn we tow'rd a more engrossing scene:
Summer asleep, embedded so in green
That the rapt gazer vainly tries to stir;
And stately Autumn—who shall picture her?—
Betwixt their bowers my boundaries intervene.

But, of those boundaries, which by my account
I more frequent, ask not. Tow'rd high or higher
The winding way may be so pleasing-sweet,
That, ere the traveler's restless eager feet
Have even forebodingly begun to tire,
They scarce know whether they descend or
mount.

SEPTEMBER

(2)

WHO would not be September, queenly, fair?

The Sun so loves me that he back returns
And, fondly gazing, with new ardor burns:
His wealth of power extending through the air
And clothing me in splendors, votive, rare,
He fills my lap and my autumnal urns
With glorious fruitage, not with small concerns
That I, mayhap, might lose and reck not where.

And yet she who would a September be
Must learn to labor but for others' good.
Were I a thoughtful true September, could
I for one moment deem that mine in fee
Is all this rich abounding blazonry?
Not mine, the bins are; mine, nor field nor wood.

AUTUMN'S PROMISE

DEEPER now, breadth allow; let, as nothing
loth,

Brown, by red, forth be led,
With a darkling purple as a guide for both.
Then, each nigh a neighbor, aid, O leaves, my
labor—

Yet fear not to token, through your breezy hum,
That, though mine ye are become,
Ye serve Beauty more, bound as by an oath.

Soon completely and, as you, intent on meetly
Heeding her demands,
I shall weary grow, shall with folded hands
Wait with you the close that shall bring repose.
See where lies the ruddy Sun—his day-course
nigh run—

On a bank of cloudy foam;
Haply he thinks now, as we, but of going home—
Going home—going home.

OCTOBER

(1)

THE last great ruler of a failing line,
Lusty and kingly, strong in thew and frame,
I view my life, I view my every aim,
Not as might ye, O men, who oft incline
Tow'rd moods that, fleeting, thwart their own
design:
My wheat-lands newly sown, my hills aflame,
The wayside traceries that enwreathe my name—
Not in them dwell the glories that are mine.

Spring's fitful dance and Summer's varying
heat
Guide but the Prologue of my acted Play:
Who leans on me—I neither him betray
Nor leave unfriended his adventuring feet.
Where wisdom and experience point the way,
What ill or danger need he fear to meet?

OCTOBER

(2)

THE day declines; and lo, the sunset hour!
And yet forget not, ye whom I convene:
There shall in no wise earlier be seen
The fair cloud-splendors that high upward tower
And, a glad world, with air-shown cities dower.
Not yet stalks forth the Night, repressive, lean,
For still the Sun surveys his wide demesne
And, smiling, doubly vindicates his power.

But sunsets pass; and the slow twilight steals
On hitherward. Though hale October yet,
Too well I know there is no amulet,
No charm, no token, that in aught reveals
A way whereby even my rule, sore beset,
Shall beat back Darkness when his grip it feels.

AUTUMN'S REPLY

AM I, O woods, ruthless indeed?
“They speak not truth,” cry, and with
 speed,
The voices clear of friends at need;
For prescience, dreaming, bids me mark
 The leaflets of some newer year:
Emerging from the smiling bark,
 They, as my advocates, appear;
While countless dropt leaves, one by one—
Some sweeter life not yet begun—
 Whisper with tender glee:
 “ We owe our hopes to thee.”

NOVEMBER

(1)

WHO sees not that my treasures are full?
My laborers, mindful of fair hopes, new-born,

Turn eager eyes upon my gathered corn,
Or, nimble-fingered, bid my shuttles pull
This way or that my cotton or my wool;
While elsewhere youth-led sports my path
adorn—

Here all day long, and there till comes the morn,
As from the night-sky fades the ramping Bull.

Why meet not, then, my thoughts in jubilee?
These things, alas and as compelled, they shun,
Reminded that by Life's own sure decree
Through every web decay's fine fibres run;
And that all forms earth-nurtured, barring none,
Must face their end, can thence in no wise flee.

NOVEMBER

(2)

NOT idly do I chronicle my days
That swiftly one by one decline, depart.
From my dim eyes letting no tear-drop start,
Content, I watch the outward-spreading haze
That lowers above my reign, my life, my ways,
Since inward guidance needs nor map nor chart:
Tilling no fields, I seek no busy mart;
For Life on me a loftier burden lays.

Though torpid are my Being-tides, or slow;
Though storms, and soon, shall rage on every
side,

Well know I Him to whom I am allied
And hourly tow'rd new thankfulness I go.
Than this more fair, there is a realm more wide:
The one way thither, cheerly still, I show.

WINTER'S THREAT

HO, ho! Hey, laggards there!
My servitors, prepare
For the Old Year a snowy shroud:
My faith, to him, no fealty owes.
What worth has he, the feeble, bowed?
Let, then, beneath my hammer-blows
His throne complain, with creaking loud,
Till down, down, his tottering senile empire goes.

Ha! dotard, why
So loth to die?
Suns lose their light
And stars grow pale:
Canst thou prevail
O'er destined Might?
Under thy heavy load of bale
Die, then, but first bid thy successor 'Hail!'

DECEMBER

(1)

A WHILE was I minded indeed to fly
These atmospheres that in mad fury shriek:
In body frail, in courage never weak,
I move right on now, deigning no reply
To the shrill winds that name the day I die.
The more they threaten, raging, bitter, bleak,
The more I show a tranquil brow or cheek
And forward turn a calm, possessive eye.

What though mere Action fail, if Thought
remains?
Thought saw the world's beginning, nay, of
Thought
The world was born. Not, then, to Law that
wrought,
But to the Power that held the Law in chains
And is the law, with all that it contains,
Look I for strength, for aid, with comfort
fraught.

DECEMBER

(2)

THE hour is near wherein my throne shall fall:
Yet ere it, sagging, shall be sunken quite,
Let me awhile, O men, guide you aright;
Still held supreme, supremely to you call;
Be, for you, still a firm unshaken wall.
For your behoof, then, I gird up my might,
That thus your eyes may tow'rd the one pure
light
More surely turn ere darkness me enthrall.

Not much men see who ne'er their vantage took;
But since he forward peers with surer gaze
Who oft looks back as through an open door,
Say not that mine is but the backward look:
Witness that brightest of my final days—
Its torch lights up even the Eternal Shore!

